

Bond Release Findings

Mine Name: Duke
Operator: Ridgepoint Mining Company
100 NW 2nd St.
Evansville, Indiana 47708

I.D. No.: S0370096
Mineral Ownership: SITLA
Surface Ownership: SITLA
Permit Term: Originally permitted in 1997

Disturbed Area: 5 acres
Regraded: None
Reseeded: None

Acres Bonded: None
Acres Proposed for Release: 5 acres
Acres Recommended for Release: None

Surety

Amount: No surety held for this site.
Form: N/A
Amount Proposed for Release: N/A
Amount Recommended for Released: N/A
Amount Remaining: N/A

Setting and Premining Environment

The site is next to Hatch Rock in San Juan county northwest of Monticello. Hatch Rock is a large sandstone outcrop, and a few people have built houses in and immediately adjacent to the rock. The mine area is flat, soils are sandy, and the premining vegetation was largely fourwing saltbush, Indian ricegrass, and needle and thread grass.

Operations

The operator had planned to process sand to extract gold and at one time had windrowed some material for this purpose. The frac tank (water storage tank) was to be used to supply water for the extraction process. I do not know whether any processing was ever done, but if it did happen, the operation was very limited.

Hole Plugging

There were no exploration holes. A water well was drilled, and although the operator's water right lapsed, there are, according to the Division of Water Rights, two other non-lapsed water rights in this same well. At least one of these is for domestic use.

Reclamation

The operator performed no reclamation. The site was left with windrows created for the mining operation, and the site, including the windrows, is being used by the residents of Hatch Rock as a race track. There is some vegetation, but the amount is limited.

According to the Trust Lands Administration, the land uses are agriculture and recreation.

Mine Engineering

There are no public safety concerns. The site is flat with no highwalls or cuts.

The operator brought a frac tank to the site this tank has been sold to the surface lessees (residents). The tank could be used to store water for irrigation, so it does appear to be useful for irrigating cropland (alfalfa).

There are no roads or similar facilities associated with the mine.

Because of the windrows, the site is not conducive to a cropland postmining land use, but the configuration is suitable for grazing.

Hydrology

The site is flat and contains no drainage channels. There are no signs of erosion, and no erosion is expected. There are no impounding structures.

Revegetation

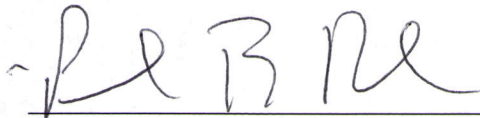
The operator has not attempted to establish vegetation, so most of the vegetation is weeds. It could be used for grazing if suitable vegetation was established.

Land Use

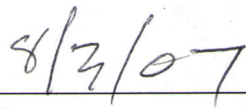
The leaseholders are using the land for recreation, i.e. a racetrack. According to Will Stokes from the Trust Lands Administration, the surface lessees requested that the surface remain as it is for their use under their surface use agreement. He recommended that the Division release the site.

Recommendation

I recommend that the site be released.



Inspector



Date